

RESPONSE TO OFFICE ACTION UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.116

BOX AF

Commissioner for Patents U.S. Patent and Trademark Office Washington, D.C. 20231

Sir:

REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION

In response to the Office Action mailed March 14, 2003, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider the above-captioned patent application in view of the following remarks.

REMARKS

1. Rejections

Claims 1, 2, and 4 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as allegedly rendered obvious by Applicant's Admitted Prior Art ("AAPA") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,307,038 to Ishimaru. Applicant respectfully disagrees.

2. 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 1, 2, and 4 stand rejected as allegedly rendered obvious by AAPA in view of Ishimaru. Specifically, the Office Action alleges that AAPA describes each and every element of claim 1 except for the projection portion directly contacting one of the annular flanges of the ring member. Nevertheless, the Office Action alleges that Ishimaru supplies this missing element. Applicant respectfully disagrees.